empanelment of a Bhangra Troupe by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). The case allegedly involves Shri Rakesh Kumar, former Director General, ICCR, Ms. Kehkeshan Tyagi, Programme Officer, ICCR and others.

(b) The Government is not aware of any other similar case in existence or under investigation, either in Delhi or in any Indian diplomatic Mission abroad.

(c) The CBI investigations that commenced in March, 2006 are continuing. Therefore, no other enquiry is being thought of until the outcome of ongoing investigations are submitted for Government's consideration.

(d) Procedures for empanelment of cultural troupes to be sent abroad have been streamlined to ensure greater objectivity and transparency.

Protest of China for Indo-US nuclear agreement

2148. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether China has registered its protest on civilian nuclear agreement Government had with America;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) and (b) The Chinese spokesman reacting to the signing of the Indo-US Civilian Nuclear Cooperation Agreement during President Bush's visit to India on March 2, 2006, said "China has a clear-cut position on the nuclear cooperation between India and the US. At present, the international non-proliferation community is working on enhancing the authority and effectiveness of the international non-proliferation regime. China hopes that the cooperation of relevant countries can contribute to these efforts, conforms to the regulations of the international non-proliferation regime and their own international obligations". He also added "As a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, China hopes that non-signatory countries can get on board as non-nuclear States at an early date, and contribute to a stronger international non-

proliferation regime as well as the regional and international peace and stability."

(c) The international trade in nuclear materials and technology is regulated, *inter-alia*, by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). China is a member of NSG. The NSG is presently examining the issue of adjusting its guidelines to enable full international civilian nuclear cooperation with India. The statement issued by NSG after its annual plenary meeting in June 2006 noted "Participating Governments continued to examine the issues raised by the US-India Joint Statement of July 2005. They discussed, in this context, a possible NSG-India relationship regarding civilian nuclear co-operation. They decided to continue their consultations and agreed to return to this matter at the next regular Consultative Group Meeting, when further information might be available."

Passage between India and Tibet

2149. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of by-passes on Sikkim Borders which are a passage between India and Tibet like Nathu La;

(b) the number and details of such passes which are also opened on the pattern of Nathu La and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of the steps taken/to be taken by Union Government to avoid the repetition of 1962 attack by China?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) At present, Nathu La is the only passage between India and Tibet in the Sikkim Sector of the India-China border areas, through which the Governments of India and China have reached an understanding to resume border trade.

(b) No such understanding has been reached between the Governments of India and China with regard to any other border pass in this sector.

(c) There has been significant progress in India-China relations, which have qualitatively improved across a wide range of areas and entered a new phase of comprehensive development. Both sides have expressed commitment to develop friendly and cooperative relations with